



# News Release

STATE OF MARYLAND

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONAL SERVICES

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.  
Governor

Michael S. Steele  
Lt. Governor

Mary Ann Saar  
Secretary

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Mark Vernarelli (410) 339-5065

## **Chaplain At Western Correctional Institution To Be Honored By Seventh Day Adventist Church**

### ***Galen Beitzel "Chaplain of the Year for Prison Ministry"***

TOWSON, MD (September 7, 2006)---As a chaplain serving 1,900 incarcerated men and a staff of 500 at Maryland's Western Correctional Institution (WCI), Galen Beitzel tends to many types of spiritual and emotional needs. This weekend, he'll be honored for his good work by the Seventh Day Adventist Church, which will award him Chaplain of the Year for Prison Ministry. He will be honored at the Church's 26<sup>th</sup> annual Prison Ministries Awards Banquet at La Fontaine Bleu in Lanham.

The Cumberland native and graduate of Eastern Christian College can thank his sister for "sending him to prison" in 2000. She was a case manager at WCI and asked him if he'd consider prison ministry.

The 46-year old Beitzel clearly loves his work. Beitzel and fellow WCI chaplain Kevin Lamp work closely with WCI staff, but find some of their biggest challenges in dealing with inmates. "We're here to help the men when someone in their family dies or when they can hardly handle the pressure of being incarcerated," says Beitzel. "The men view themselves as being in a hopeless situation. They have anger against the world. Some are sick in the prison infirmary. We chaplains tell the men about hope and love and about the joy of being in a relationship with God and how He will change their lives."

WCI Warden John Galley, a veteran of 40 years in corrections and law enforcement, says chaplains are among the most crucial staff members any prison can have. "Prison life is stressful," says the warden. "Chaplains provide the safe haven for inmates to escape from the stress, where they can let down the screen of bravado. Chaplain Beitzel is one of the very best that I have ever had the good fortune to work with. He is one of those rare individuals who can successfully balance his security responsibilities with being a helping agent at the same time."

---more---

Chaplain Beitzel says he is especially proud to be honored by a group--- the Seventh Day Adventists--- with which he has no affiliation. It shows, he says, his commitment to all inmates and staff, regardless of their faith.

Chaplain Beitzel's "other job" is also to minister; he's the pastor of the Friendsville First Christian Church.

Recognizing the critical need for the services chaplains provide, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services has more than 50 chaplains in place throughout its prisons and pre-trial facilities. They work with people of every faith.

###